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MEDIEVAL HISTORY

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CHAPTER X.

(A)

MUSLIM CIVILISATION DURING THE ABBASID PERIOD.

WHEN the Abbasids wrested from the Umayyads in 750 the headship of the Muslim world, they entered into possession of an empire stretching from the Indus to the Atlantic and from the southern shore of the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean. It had absorbed the whole of the Persian Empire of the Sasanians, and the rich provinces of the Roman Empire on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean; but though Constantinople itself had been threatened more than once, and raids into Asia Minor were so frequent as at certain periods to have become almost a yearly occurrence, the ranges of the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus still served as the eastern barrier of Byzantine territory against the spread of Arab domination. In Africa, however, all opposition to the westward progress of the Arab arms had been broken down, and the whole of the peninsula of Spain, with the exception of Asturia, had passed under Muslim rule. For ninety years Damascus had been the capital of the Arab Empire, and the mainstay of the Umayyad forces in the time of their greatest power had been the Arab tribes domiciled in Syria from the days when that province still formed part of the Roman Empire; but the Abbasids had come into power mainly through support from Persia, and their removal of the capital to Baghdad (founded by Maṣṣūr, the second Caliph of the new dynasty, in 762) on a site only thirty miles from Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sasanian Shāhanshāh, marks their recognition of the shifting of the centre of power.

From this period Persian influence became predominant and the chief offices of state came to be held by men of Persian origin; the most noteworthy example is that of the family of the Barmecides (Barmakids), which for half a century exercised the predominant influence in the government until Hārūn destroyed them in 803. It was probably due to the influence of the old Persian ideal of kingship that under the Abbasids the person of the Caliph came to be surrounded with greater pomp and ceremony. The court of the Umayyads had retained something of the patriarchal simplicity of early Arab society, and they had been readily accessible to their subjects; but as the methods of government became more centralised and the court of the Caliph more splendid and awe-striking, the ruler himself tended to be more difficult of access, and

the presence of the executioner by the side of the throne became under the Abbasids a terrible symbol of the autocratic character of their rule.

A further feature of the new dynasty was the emphasis it attached to the religious character of the dignity of the Caliph. In their revolt against the Umayyads, the Abbasids had come forward in defence of the purity of Islām as against those survivals of the old Arab heathenism which were so striking a feature of the Umayyad court. The converts and descendants of converts, whose support had been most effective in the destruction of the Umayyads, were animated with a more zealous religious spirit than had ever found expression among large sections of the Arabs, who, in consequence of the superficial character of their conversion to Islām, and their aristocratic pride and tribal exclusiveness, so contrary to the spirit of Islāmic brotherhood, had been reluctant to accord to the converts from other races the privileges of the new faith. The Abbasids raised the standard of revolt in the name of the family of the Prophet, and by taking advantage of the widespread sympathy felt for the descendants of ‘Alī, they obtained the support of the various Shī‘ah factions. Though they took all the fruits of victory for themselves, they continued to lay emphasis on the religious character of their rule, and theologians and men of learning received a welcome at their court such as they had never enjoyed under the Umayyads. On ceremonial occasions the Abbasid Caliph appeared clad in the sacred mantle of the Prophet, and titles such as that of Khalīfah of Allāh (vicegerent of God) and shadow of God upon earth came to be frequently applied to him. As the power of the central authority grew weaker, so the etiquette of the court tended to become more elaborate and servile, and the Caliph made his subjects kiss the ground before him or would allow the higher officials either to kiss his hand or foot or the edge of his robe.

The vast empire into the possession of which they had entered was too enormous and made up of elements too heterogeneous to be long held together under a system, the sole unifying principle of which was payment of tribute to the Caliph. A prince of the Umayyad family, ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, who had succeeded in escaping to Spain when practically all his relatives had been massacred, took advantage of tribal jealousies among the Arab chiefs in Spain to seize this country for himself, and to detach it from the empire, in 756. North Africa, which had been placed by Hārūn under the government of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Aghlab, became practically independent under this energetic governor, who established a dynasty that lasted for more than a century (800–909); though his successors contented themselves with the title of emir, the Caliph in Baghdad appears to have been powerless to interfere with their administration. Hārūn himself seems to have realised that the break-up of the Arab empire was inevitable, since in 802 he made arrangements for dividing the administration of it between his sons Amīn and Ma’mūn. But on the death of their father in 809 civil war broke out between the two brothers.

The Arabs lent their support to Amīn, and under his leadership made a last effort to regain for themselves the control of the Caliphate; but in 813 Ṭāhir, Ma'mūn's brilliant Persian general, defeated him, and as a reward for his successful siege of Baghdad was appointed by Ma'mūn to the government of Khurāsān, where he and his descendants for half a century were practically independent. Egypt broke away from the empire when a son of one of Ma'mūn's Turkish slaves, Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn, having been appointed deputy-governor of Egypt in 868, succeeded in making himself independent not only in Egypt but also in Syria, which he added to his dominions, and ceased sending money contributions to Baghdad. This breaking away of the outlying provinces of the empire was rendered the more possible by the weakness of the central government. Ma'mūn's brother and successor, Mu'tasim (833-842), made the fatal mistake of creating an army composed almost entirely of Turkish mercenaries. Their excesses made life in Baghdad so intolerable that the Caliph, in order to be safe from the vengeance of the inhabitants of his own capital, moved to a site three days' journey up the Tigris to the north of Baghdad, and from 836 to 892 Sāmarrā was the Abbasid capital where nine successive Caliphs lived, practically as prisoners of their own Turkish bodyguard. While the Turkish officers made and unmade Caliphs as they pleased, the country was ruined by constantly recurring disorders and insurrection. In 865, while rival claimants were fighting for the crown, Baghdad was besieged for nearly a year, and the slave revolt for fourteen years (869-883) left the delta of the Euphrates at the mercy of undisciplined bands of marauders who terrorised the inhabitants and even sacked great cities, such as Baṣrah, Ahwāz, and Wāsiṭ, shewing the weakness of the central power even in territories so close to the capital. A further disaster was soon to follow in the great Carmathian revolt, which takes its name from one of the propagandists of the Ismā'īlī Shī'ah doctrine in 'Irāq during the latter part of the ninth century. His followers for nearly a century (890-990) spread terror throughout Mesopotamia, and even threatened Baghdad. They extended their ravages as far as Syria, murdering and pillaging wherever they went. In 930 they plundered the city of Mecca, put to death 30,000 Muslims there, and carried off the Black Stone together with immense booty.

These movements represent only a part of the risings and revolts that brought anarchy into the Caliph's dominions and cut off the sources of his revenue. In the midst of this period of disorder the Caliph Mu'tamid, shortly before his death in 892, transferred the capital once more to Baghdad, but the change did not bring the Caliphs deliverance from the tutelage of their Turkish troops, and they were as much at their mercy as before.

Deliverance came from Persia where the Buwaihids, who claimed descent from one of the Sasanian kings, had been extending their power from the Caspian Sea southward through Persia, until in 945 they

entered Baghdad, nominally as deliverers of the Caliph from his rebellious Turkish troops. For nearly a century from this date the Caliphs were mere puppets in the hands of successive Buwaihid emirs, who set them upon the throne and deposed them as they pleased. The Caliph Mustakfī, whose deliverance from his mutinous Turkish soldiery had been the pretext for the Buwaihid occupation of Baghdad, was in the same year dragged from his throne and cruelly blinded. So low had the office of Caliph sunk by this period that there were still living two other Abbasid princes who like Mustakfī had sat upon the Abbasid throne, but blinded and robbed of all their wealth were now dependent upon charity or such meagre allowance as the new rulers cared to dole out to them. His cousin Muṭṭī' was set up to succeed him, but though he held the office of Caliph for twenty-eight years (946–974) he had no voice in the administration, and could not even nominate any of the ministers who carried on the business of the state in his name; helpless in the hands of his Buwaihid master, he lived upon a scanty allowance. He was compelled to abdicate in favour of his son Tā'i', after a riotous outburst of religious intolerance in Baghdad, and Tā'i' for seventeen years (974–991) suffered similar humiliations. He was deposed at last in favour of his cousin Qādir (991–1031), of whose reign of forty years hardly any incident is recorded, because political events pursued their course without any regard to him.

Meanwhile in Upper Mesopotamia an Arab family, the Ḥamdānids, at first governors of Mosul, extended their authority over the surrounding country, and one member of the family, Saif-ad-Daulah, made himself master of Aleppo and brought the whole of Northern Syria under his rule in 944. In North Africa a rival Caliphate had arisen under the Shī'ah Fāṭimids, who annexed Egypt in 969, and after more than one attempt occupied Syria in 988. By the beginning of the eleventh century the power of the Buwaihids was on the decline and they had to give way before the Ghaznawids and the Seljūqs, the latter a Turkish tribe which made its first appearance in history about the middle of the tenth century. In 1055 the Seljūq chief, Ṭughril Beg, after having conquered the greater part of Persia, entered Baghdad and delivered the Caliph from subservience to the Buwaihids. From Baghdad Ṭughril Beg marched to the conquest of Mosul and Upper Mesopotamia, and when he died in 1063 he left to his successor, Alp Arslān, an empire which eight years later stretched from the Hindu Kush to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Alp Arslān died in 1072 and his son, Malik Shāh, still further extended the empire by the conquest of Transoxiana. One of the Seljūq generals, Atsiz, drove the Fāṭimids out of Syria and Palestine, and occupied Jerusalem in 1071 and Damascus in 1075. Under the protection of the Seljūqs, the Caliph in Baghdad enjoyed at the hand of these orthodox Sunnīs a certain amount of respect such as he had failed to receive at the hand of the Shī'ah Buwaihids, but his political authority hardly extended beyond the walls of the city.

The death of Malik Shāh in 1092 was followed by a period of confusion, during which his four sons fought one another for the succession, but in 1117 the supreme authority passed to his third son, Sanjar, the last of the Great Seljūqs to exercise a nominal sovereignty over the whole empire; before his death in 1155 it had split up into a number of separate principalities, some of them ruled over by Seljūq princes, others by officers who, acting first as guardians (or Atābegs) to minors, later assumed the reins of power and founded dynasties of their own.

One permanent result of the rise of the Seljūq empire was that the way had been opened for Muslim domination in Asia Minor. During the whole of the Abbasid period the ranges of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus had formed the frontier line between the Roman and the Arab Empires, and though incursions had frequently, and during certain periods annually, been made by the Muslim troops into Anatolia, no permanent result of these military expeditions into the great plateau of Asia Minor had been achieved beyond the temporary occupation of some fortresses. But the Seljūqs made their way into Asia Minor from Northern Persia through Armenia, and before the end of the eleventh century had occupied all the centre of Asia Minor, leaving only the kingdom of Lesser Armenia and the coast-line which was held by Byzantine troops. This western movement of the Seljūqs and the consequent alarm of the Emperor of Constantinople who appealed for help to the Christian powers of Europe, were among the causes of the Crusades.

When the crusaders entered Syria in 1098, the Seljūq empire had already begun to break up; the greater part of Mesopotamia and Syria had been parcelled out into military fiefs in which the military officers of the Seljūqs had made themselves independent. The political situation of the Muslim world was but little affected by the establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099, and the most important effect of the Crusades upon Muslim history was the rise of the Ayyūbid dynasty, established by Saladin in his long conflict with the crusaders culminating in the battle of Ḥiṭṭīn and the conquest of Jerusalem in 1187.

Farther east, the fratricidal struggle still went on between rival Muslim houses fighting one another for the possession of the fragments of the Seljūq empire. For a brief period the Caliph in Baghdad succeeded in exerting some authority in the neighbourhood of his capital, and Nāṣir (1180–1225), freed from the tutelage of the Seljūqs, restored to the Caliphate some of its old independence, though the narrow territory over which he ruled extended only from Takrīt to the head of the Persian Gulf. His most formidable rival was the Khwārazm Shāh, whose kingdom, founded by a descendant of one of the Turkish slaves of the Seljūq Sultan Malik Shāh, had been gradually extended until it included the greater part of Persia. Under 'Alā-ud-Dīn (1199–1220) the kingdom of Khwārazm embraced also Bukhārā and Samarqand, and in 1214 Afghanistan; but his career of conquest was short-lived, for on his eastern border

appeared the Mongol army of Jenghiz Khān which soon involved in a common devastation and ruin the greater part of the various Muslim kingdoms of the East. Muslim civilisation has never recovered from the destruction which the Mongols inflicted upon it. Great centres of culture, such as Herāt and Bukhārā, were reduced to ashes and the Muslim population was ruthlessly massacred. With the Mongol conquest of southern Russia and of China we are not concerned here, but their armies after sweeping across Persia appeared in 1256 under the command of Hūlāgū before the walls of Baghdad, and after a brief siege of one month the last Caliph of the Abbasid House, Mustaʿsim, had to surrender, and was put to death together with most of the members of his family; 800,000 of the inhabitants were brought out in batches from the city to be massacred, and the greater part of the city itself was destroyed by fire. The Mongol armies then moved on into Syria, where first Aleppo and then Damascus fell into their hands, but when they advanced to the conquest of Egypt they met with the first check in their westward movement. Egypt since 1254 had been under the rule of the Mamlūk sultans, and the Egyptian army in 1260 defeated the Mongols at ‘Ain Jālūt in Palestine, and following up this victory drove them out of Syria altogether. After the death of Jenghiz Khān in 1227, the vast Mongol empire had been divided among his four sons; of Muslim territories, Transoxiana fell to the lot of his second son Jagatai; one of his grandsons, Hūlāgū, the conqueror of Baghdad, founded the Īl-khān dynasty of Persia and included in his kingdom the whole of Persia, Mesopotamia, and part of Asia Minor. The Seljūqs of Asia Minor had managed to maintain a precarious existence as vassals of the Mongols by making a timely submission; and, under the rule of the Mamlūk Sultans of Egypt, Syria kept the Mongols out. Such remained the general condition of the eastern provinces of what had once been the empire of the Abbasid Caliphs, during the remainder of the thirteenth century.

The Abbasid epoch has dazzled the imagination of the Muslim world with the vision of a period of great wealth and splendour, and the degradation of its latter days was blotted out by the remembrance of its earlier glories, though these lasted barely 83 years. The shadowy Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo bore witness for two centuries and a half (1261–1517) to the impressive character of the ideal of a united Muslim Empire, under the leadership of the Imām-Caliph, regarded as the source of all authority, in spite of the fact that the disruptive influence of national movements and the self-assertion of provincial groups had irremediably destroyed the reality centuries before. As the rule of the Caliph was an absolutism, tempered only by the divinely-inspired law, to which he with every other Muslim had to submit, the state perished with him. For Muslim political theory contained no principle of growth, to provide for the development of self-governing institutions; no attempt had been made to widen the

basis of government, or train the subjects to co-operate with the state, and the continuity of city life—so characteristic a feature of political life in the West—was unknown in the Muslim East.

By its elaboration of systems of law, however, the Abbasid period bequeathed to succeeding generations authoritative codes which are still in operation in various parts of the world, but the theocratic origin of this law, based as it is on the unalterable, eternal Word of God, has continuously hampered its adjustment to the changing conditions of political and social life. In other branches of intellectual activity, notably mathematics and medicine, permanent results were attained, of which some account is given in the following sections.

The foundation for the political theories that find embodiment in the organisation of the Abbasid Empire was laid during the period of the Umayyads. These theories were in the main the outgrowth of two definite factors. In the first place, the conquering Arabs were faced with the problem of administering the vast Empire that, in the brief space of a few decades, had fallen into their hands, while their past history had given them no experience of organised methods of government and administration, and their tribal system had ill prepared them for any large outlook upon material problems. But they found in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, a large body of trained officials, accustomed to the smooth working of the traditional method of administration in the Roman Empire, and familiar with the departmental routine of bureaux of government. Similarly, within the Persian empire, in spite of the anarchy that had prevailed after Chosroes II, the administrative machinery of the Sasanids, with its large body of officials for the collection of taxes, was still available. There is abundant evidence to shew that in the provinces of both these Empires the Arabs made very little change in the methods of administering the country. Accordingly, at a time when Muslim theory was formless and inchoate, it came under the powerful influence of one of the greatest attempts to systematize social and political life that the world has ever seen, and just as Muslim law bears the imprint of the Roman legal system, and the earliest systematic treatises of Islām appear to have been modelled on catechisms of Christian doctrines, so the fiscal system of the Arabs followed the lines that had been laid down centuries before by Roman administrators.

On the other hand, during the whole of the Umayyad period, there had been living in Medina the representatives of the apostolic age of Islām, engaged in attempts to reduce to order the incoherent materials for a Muslim theory of life based upon the ordinances of the Koran (Qur'ān) and the traditionary sayings of the Prophet. As these legists and theologians viewed with horror the heathenish ideals and manners of the Umayyad court, and accordingly kept aloof from practical concern with the details of political life, the theories of the state and of legislation which they worked out very largely ignore the more stable

development of the Arab state. Muslim political and legal theories have consequently never been able wholly to shake themselves free from the unreality that marked their beginnings in the rarified atmosphere of speculation in which early Muslim thinkers lived in Medina. When the Abbasids came into power, largely with the help of an orthodox reaction against the alleged heathenism of the Umayyad house, and with the support of Persian converts whose theological zeal was unknown to the latitudinarian Arabs, they attracted to their new capital, Baghdad, the legists and theologians of Medina and lavished a generous patronage on students of theology; at the same time they exercised control over these thinkers and, while helping orthodoxy to triumph in the state, the Abbasids took care to make use of it for their own selfish ends.

According to Islāmic theory, religious dogma, maxims of statecraft, legal ordinances, and the details of the social life of the believer, all have their source in the revealed text of the Koran and in the traditionary sayings and practices of the Prophet; where these fail to provide the required guidance, the consensus of the community is decisive, and most Muslim thinkers have allowed also an analogical deduction from the first two sources to particular cases not expressly mentioned in either of them. During the third century of the Muslim era were compiled the six great collections of traditions that are held to be authoritative in the Sunnī world. These fix definitely the theories that had grown out of the experience of preceding generations of Muslims. These traditions gave final expression to the theory of the Caliphate, according to which the head of the Muslim community, as successor (Khalifah) of the Prophet, carried on the same functions that he had performed, with the exception of the exercise of the prophetic office which was held to have come to an end with him. Accordingly the Caliph was supreme administrator, judge, and general. The legists summed up his functions as comprising the defence and maintenance of the faith; war against those who refused to accept Islām or submit to Muslim rule; the protection of the country of Islām and the provision of troops for guarding the frontiers; the decision of legal disputes and the punishment of wrongdoers; the collection and disbursement of taxes; the payment of salaries and the appointing of competent officials. The holder of the office had to be a member of the tribe of the Quraish, to which the Prophet himself had belonged, and had to possess the physical and intellectual qualities necessary for the performance of the duties above mentioned. In theory the office was elective, but the first Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty had made it hereditary, and generally each Caliph nominated his successor during his life. It was not necessary that the succession should follow in the direct line. Of the fourteen Umayyad Caliphs only four were succeeded by a son, and of the first twenty-four Caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty only six had a son as his successor; and though, later, direct succession became more common, out of the total number of thirty-six the office passed from

father to son in sixteen cases only. The fiction of election was kept up by the institution of the oath of allegiance which was taken by the highest officials and great nobles of the state to the Caliph on his succession and sometimes also to the heir apparent.

The Caliph was also at the same time Imām or leader of the faithful in public worship, and, though he often delegated this religious function to any ordinary Imām, there were even up to the latter days of the Abbasid dynasty solemn occasions on which the Caliph came forward as leader of the faithful in this public act of divine worship. The last Abbasid Caliph who kept up this practice was Rāḍī (934–940). Though the Sunnī doctrine never attached such mysterious significance to the office of the Imām as was characteristic of the Shīʿah sect, yet a certain degree of reverence became attached to this office even among the Sunnīs, and the theorists maintained the necessity of an Imām as leader of the whole body of believers; it was he alone who could declare a general Jihād, calling upon all the faithful, both men and women, to join in war against the unbelievers, and he was held to be the source of all legitimate authority, both in the state and in the administration of justice. In theory every governor was appointed by the Imām-Khalīfah, and even when the separate provinces of the empire had become independent and the Caliph was a helpless puppet, this fiction was still maintained, and a sultan or emir, though he might have carved out a kingdom for himself by force of arms, would apply to the Abbasid Caliph for a diploma of investiture.

The organisation of the administrative machinery is traditionally attributed to Omar (634–644), who established a Dīwān or public register of income and expenditure, the original purpose of which was the division of the revenues of the state among the various members of the Muslim community. But Omar's fiscal system soon broke down, and the machinery of government gradually became more complicated by the establishment of separate administrative departments, the number and designation of which during the Abbasid period varied from time to time. Among the most important were the Treasury (Dīwān al-Kharāj), which kept an account of the taxes, and the State Chancery (Dīwān at-Tauqīʿ), which issued the decrees of the Caliph and exercised control over provincial governors. There were also separate departments for official correspondence, for the administration of the crown lands, for the army, for the postal service, for accounts, for general expenditure, and for the freedmen and slaves of the Imperial House.

In the centralisation of government so characteristic of the new dynasty, the institution of the Wazīr (Vizier) came into prominence. Whereas the Umayyads, following the traditionary methods of primitive Arab society, were surrounded by an aristocracy made up of chiefs of their own race whom they would consult on special occasions, the more autocratic government of the Abbasids placed the great army of officials under the control of a minister, the Wazīr, to whom the Caliph delegated

a large portion of the details of administration. When the Caliph (as was often the case) did not wish to be disturbed in his pleasures by the cares of state, the Wazīr acquired almost autocratic powers and could amass immense wealth; all officials, even the great provincial governors, owed their appointment to him, and he controlled the whole machinery of the state. But his was a perilous position, and the annals of the Abbasid dynasty are full of stories of the sudden ruin that destroyed great and prosperous ministers.

One of the most important departments was that of the State Post (*Dīwān al-Barīd*), an institution that the Arabs took over from the Romans, as the very designation indicates, *barīd* being a loan-word from the Latin *veredus*; but the story that Hārūn's great Persian minister, the Barmecide Yaḥyà, reorganised the postal system on a new basis, probably indicates that the Arabs incorporated also into their system the old organisation of the Persian Empire. Like the Roman *cursus publicus*, this department was designed only to serve the interests of the state, by keeping the central government in touch with the outlying provinces and providing secret information of the doings of the various governors. Relays of swift mounts were kept at post stations on the great highways, and made possible the rapid communication of information and official orders. In every large province the postmaster had to keep the Caliph informed of every event of importance, to report on the state of the finances and the administration of the crown lands, the behaviour of the officers of the state, and the condition of agriculture and the peasantry. The cost of keeping up this large establishment of postal officials, together with the various stations and the camels and horses required, was very heavy, but as it constituted the only possible means of controlling the administration of such a vast Empire, the Caliphs rightly attached much importance to it, and the Chief Postmaster at the capital had to communicate despatches to the Caliph immediately on their arrival. Pigeons also appear to have been used for transmitting news. Further, this organised control of the great highways, where these postal stations were established, facilitated the movements of the high officials and of the troops.

In addition to this department there was a large force of detective police, and an elaborate system of espionage became a characteristic feature of the administration, whereby a Caliph set spies to watch his officials and even the members of his own family, while they in return employed their own spies to report upon his movements and utterances. For this purpose, in addition to regular members of the postal service, persons of every social grade, merchants, pedlars, physicians, and slave girls, were employed.

It was in harmony with this inquisition into the affairs of private persons that the Muḥtasib, or Prefect of Police, should not only be concerned with preventing breaches of the civil and religious law but also act as a censor of morals. One of his most important duties was to inspect

weights and measures, and control commercial transactions by preventing fraud in sales and the counterfeiting of goods or the making of extortionate charges. He forbade the public sale of wine and the playing of musical instruments in public places. In regard to the practices of religion it was his duty to see that the correct ritual observances were followed, for instance, to prevent the utterance of religious formulae not sanctioned by authority, or the repetition in a loud voice of those that were to be uttered in low tones; he could stop a man from taking part in public worship who had not performed the prescribed rites of ablution, or had not carried them out according to the strict prescriptions of the ritual law; he could also punish a man who was detected breaking the fast of *Ramādān*. He found suitable husbands for widows and took care that no divorced women married before the expiration of the legal period. He protected slaves from having tasks imposed upon them that they were not strong enough to perform, and punished the owners of beasts of burden if they did not provide their animals with sufficient provender or overworked them. His authority even extended to the inspection of dolls, to see whether they bore any resemblance to idols or served any other purpose than that of accustoming little girls to the care of infants. Unless he had received express authority, the Prefect of Police could not interfere with the office of the magistrate, for if an accused person denied his guilt the matter had to be brought before the judge.

The judges were appointed either directly by the Caliph or an official, such as his *Wazīr*, or by a governor to whom authority had been delegated. In the appointment of a judge the locality in which he could exercise jurisdiction had to be expressly stated, and his authority was either general or restricted. In the former instance he not only tried cases but, among other duties, appointed guardians for minors, lunatics, and others who could not manage their own property, administered religious endowments, and saw that wills were carried out according to the directions of the testator. There was a special court of appeal in which were heard complaints of the miscarriage of justice in the administrative or judicial department; the earlier Abbasid Caliphs received such complaints in public audience, but after the reign of *Muhtadī* (869-870) this office was put into commission and a special officer appointed as president of the Board for the investigation of grievances. In the reign of *Muqtadir* (908-932), his mother, who controlled the administration, appointed to this post her Mistress of the Robes.

The organisation of the army varied at different times in Muslim history. By the Abbasid period the troops were divided into two classes: the regular Arab army kept on a permanent footing and paid out of the State Treasury, and the volunteers who were not entered on the register and received no fixed pay. The latter received grants out of the poor tax, and took part in the annual raids into Byzantine territory or into the

neighbouring countries of the unbelievers. As the Abbasids came into power largely through the assistance of troops from Khurāsān, these formed a separate division of the army recruited from that part of their dominions. Later on, Mu'taṣim (833-842) added another separate army corps made up of Turks, and also enrolled a contingent of slaves mainly from North Africa. The favour which Mu'taṣim extended towards these foreign troops, and the disaffection excited by the excesses they committed on the citizens of Baghdad, was one of the reasons that determined him to transfer his capital to Sāmarrā in 836. Here he built enormous barracks for his Turkish troops and encouraged Turkish chieftains to come and live under his protection; he assigned separate sections of the vast city that grew up around his palace to the Turkish troops according to their tribes and their original habitat, and, in order to keep them apart from the surrounding population, he purchased numbers of Turkish slave girls whom he compelled his troops to marry; fixed stipends were assigned to these slave girls and registers were kept of their names. These Turkish guards came gradually to outnumber every other section of the army, and they grew in wealth and influence as the number of posts conferred upon them increased, until gradually the administration passed from the hands of the Persians into those of the Turks, and the Caliph became quite at the mercy of his Turkish guard. Things came to such a pass that more than one Caliph was put to death by his own troops, and the election of his successor was determined by his Turkish officers. Still greater confusion arose when rival factions among the Turks themselves came to blows with one another: the administration fell into disorder, the provinces ceased to remit revenue to the capital, and the troops mutinied and clamoured for their arrears of pay. It was to escape from such an intolerable position that the Caliph Mu'tamid in 892 abandoned Sāmarrā as a capital.

As the central authority declined and the Empire broke up into a number of independent states and fiefs, the character of the military organisation changed, and in place of the great standing army under a single command a system of military fiefs grew up, according to which different members of a ruling house or separate chiefs were given charge over a town or a district, on condition that they paid an annual tribute and supplied at their own cost a fixed number of troops to their overlord. But in all these separate bodies of troops the presence of Turkish soldiers became a common feature, since fresh accessions to their number were continuously coming from the East as the Turkish troops learned of the wealth and power that their fellow-tribesmen could gain by service within the Muslim Empire.

Many of these Turkish soldiers were slaves, and one reason for the dependence of the Caliphs upon them was the belief that security could be obtained by the possession of a bodyguard entirely dependent on the favour of the sovereign without any ties of family or relationship with

the rest of the population. When the Caliphs became disillusioned of the notion that loyalty could be purchased in this manner from the Turks, they still continued to place reliance upon their slaves, and Muqtadir (908-932) in his desire to maintain his authority against the troublesome Turkish troops acquired as many as 11,000 slaves, some of whom he promoted to high office and placed in command of his army.

Slavery from the outset had been a recognised institution of Muslim society, but from the reign of this Caliph the tenure by slaves of some of the highest offices of the state became an increasingly characteristic feature of the social organisation. Conquests and raids had from the earliest days of the expansion of the Arab Empire added to the slave population of the great cities, but a constant supply was kept up later through the well-organised slave-trade, which brought such enormous numbers of black slaves from Africa that their armed risings were at times a source of serious disorder. The white slaves were brought in thousands from various Turkish tribes in Central Asia, and also from Mediterranean ports, especially from Spain and Italy. Many of these slaves were employed by their masters in trade and commercial enterprises of various kinds.

The transference of the capital to 'Irāq by the Abbasid Caliphs was followed by a period of great commercial expansion. Not only did the possession of enormous wealth create a demand for costly articles, such as silks from China and furs from northern Europe, but trade was promoted by certain special conditions, such as the vast extent of the Muslim empire, the spread of Arabic as a world-language, and the exalted status assigned to the merchant in the Muslim system of ethics; it was remembered that the Prophet himself had been a merchant and had commended trading during the pilgrimage to Mecca. Not only did the great trade routes through the empire facilitate commercial relations, but under the Abbasids navigation received a great impulse; for the Eastern trade, Basrah, a Muslim creation, was one of the most flourishing ports; in the West, the Arabs entered into the inheritance of the great Mediterranean ports of the Roman Empire. To the sea-faring inhabitants of the coasts of Syria and Egypt the Arabs were indebted also for the building up of their fleet, which became so formidable a rival of the Byzantine navy.

The theory of the Arab State was that of a community of believers holding the primitive faith revealed by God to Adam and successive prophets, and occupying the heritage of the earth that God had given to Adam and his descendants; but from the very outset there was a recognition of persons who did not accept the faith of Islām, and the Koran enjoins toleration towards the "people of the Book," *i.e.* the Jews and the Christians, who are looked upon as professing a religion that is a corrupted form of God's original and oft-repeated revelation.

According to the theory of the Arab legists based on the practice of the Prophet and his immediate successors, religious toleration was granted

to the Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, on condition that they paid tribute. The non-Muslim living under Arab rule was technically called *Dhimmi* (literally, one with whom a compact has been made), and the theory was that agreements were made by the Arab conquerors as they extended their authority over different cities and districts. The Arab historians record several examples of such agreements, but by the Abbasid period the actual practice appears to have become uniform, modified only by the idiosyncracies of local governors. Under the influence of the communistic theory of the young Muslim community, in accordance with which the immense wealth poured into the Public Treasury, as the Arab conquests were extended in the Roman and Persian Empires, was divided among the faithful, some attempt appears to have been made to prevent the Arab Muslims from settling down in conquered territory, with the intention that they might constitute a permanent army. Consequently the payers of taxes were the original inhabitants of the conquered territories, and recent investigations go to prove that the taxes they paid to the Arabs were much the same as those they had been accustomed to pay the former governments. But, according to the theory of the legists, the non-Muslims paid *jizyah* as a poll tax, in return for which they received protection for life and property and exemption from military service. The system broke down when the first conquests were followed by the conversion to Islām of large sections of the newly-acquired subjects; their claim to be exempted from the land-tax they had been accustomed to pay threatened the state with financial ruin, and the government was compelled to levy land-tax from Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The *jizyah* in some form or another continued to be levied upon the members of the protected religious communities that refused to accept Islām; it is very doubtful, however, whether the accounts given in legal treatises on the subject correspond to the actual practice followed in the collection of this tax.

In the Koran the only "people of the Book" expressly mentioned were the Jews and the Christians. When the conquest of Persia brought a large Zoroastrian population under Arab rule, it was conveniently remembered that the Prophet had given orders that the Zoroastrians were to be treated just like the "people of the Book" and that *jizyah* might be taken from them also. A similar policy of religious tolerance was extended to the heathen Ḥarrānians and Mandaeans, though, according to the strict letter of the law, they should either have been put to death or compelled to embrace Islām. The Manichaeans likewise were not entitled to toleration according to Muslim law, but they survived as a separate sect up to the tenth century, and during the reign of Ma'mūn (813-833) the leader of this sect held a public disputation with the Muslim theologians in Baghdad in the presence of the Caliph himself; but even on this occasion the Caliph had to furnish this religious teacher with a bodyguard to prevent his being exposed to insult from the fanatical

populace, and in later reigns the persecution of the Manichaeans became so severe that those who escaped fled into Turkestan.

During the period of the Umayyads the religious indifference that characterised most of the rulers of this dynasty, with the exception of Omar ibn 'Abd-al-'Aziz (717-720), lent support to this theory of toleration, and the condition of the Christians and the Jews appears to have been tolerable, except, of course, that like all the subject peoples, they were always exposed to the exactions of rapacious taxgatherers. There was a change for the worse with the advent of the Abbasids, in consequence of the emphasis that this dynasty laid upon religious considerations and its zealous patronage of orthodoxy. Hārūn (786-809) passed an edict compelling Jews and Christians to adopt a different costume to that of the Muslims, but it appears to have been put into force only in the capital and even there to have soon ceased to be applied. This temporary change of attitude was very possibly the result of the treachery which the Emperor Nicephorus shewed in his dealings with this Caliph. A more serious persecution broke out in the reign of Mutawakkil (847-861). This fanatical Caliph lent the support of the state to the strong orthodox re-action that had set in against the rationalistic tendencies which had had free play under former rulers, and he came forward as the champion of the extreme orthodox party to which the mass of the Muslim population belonged. He persecuted the Mu'tazilites, whose doctrines had been in the ascendancy in the court during the reign of Ma'mūn, and branded with ridicule their doctrine that the Koran was created. He shewed a similar persecuting zeal against the Shī'ah sect, the members of which were imprisoned and scourged, and he pulled down the tomb of the martyred Husain at Karbalā and forbade pilgrimages to its site. The Christians suffered equally during this period of intolerance. They were ordered to wear a distinctive dress, dismissed from their employments in government offices, forbidden to ride on horses, and harassed with several other restrictions. The churches that had been built since the Arab conquest were ordered to be pulled down, and the dwellings of some of the wealthier Christians were turned into mosques. To the reign of this fanatical ruler belongs the restrictive ordinances which were traditionally ascribed to Omar, the companion and successor of the Prophet; but these intolerant regulations appear to have been in force spasmodically only, and during the confusion into which the administration fell it was not possible to put them into force any more than any other statutes. After each fanatical outburst of persecution the Christians returned to their posts in the government offices; indeed the administration could not do without them, for it had depended upon their special knowledge and skill from the very beginning of the Arab conquest. Despite the complaints repeatedly made by fanatics, the Caliphs persisted in bestowing high offices on non-Muslims. On one occasion when objections were made to the Caliph Mu'tadid (892-902) against a Christian being governor of

the important city of Anbār (on the Euphrates about forty-two miles from Baghdad), he claimed the right to appoint a Christian to any office for which he might be fitted, and added that such a man might be more suitable than a Muslim since the latter might possibly shew undue consideration to his co-religionists.

That such a high administrative office should have been entrusted to a Christian was probably a rare occurrence, but the ministry of finance seems to have been generally filled with them. As physicians too, the Christians exercised great influence at court and acquired considerable wealth. Gabriel, the personal physician to the Caliph Hārūn, was a Nestorian Christian and is said to have amassed a fortune of more than three and a half million pounds sterling.

In trade and commerce too the Christians attained considerable affluence; indeed it was frequently their wealth that excited against them the jealous cupidity of the mob. The wealth possessed by the Christians may be estimated by the magnificent churches erected under Muslim rule, though according to the theory of the legists it was not permissible to build any new churches in Muslim territory after the conquest. In addition to the record of the building of many churches under the Umayyads, several such foundations are mentioned in the Abbasid period, for instance, in 759 the Nestorian Bishop Cyprian completed a church in Nisibis, on which he had expended the sum of 56,000 dinārs. In the reign of Mahdī (775–785) a church was built in Baghdad for the use of the Christian prisoners taken captive during the numerous campaigns against the Byzantine Empire, and his son Hārūn gave permission for the erection of new churches, including a magnificent building in which the Jacobite Bishop of Mārdīn enshrined the bodies of the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel. The Christian prime minister of the Buwaihid prince Aḍud-ud-Daulah (949–982), who administered Southern Persia and ‘Irāq, also built a number of new churches, and the building of churches and monasteries is recorded as late as the reign of Mustadī (1170–1180). Some evidence of the wealth in Christian hands is given by the large sums which were expended in bribes, *e.g.* in 912 the Nestorian Patriarch in Baghdad spent 30,000 dinārs (gold coins) in intrigues against a rival patriarch of the Orthodox Church; the Nestorian Patriarch, Īsho‘yabh, in 1190 secured his appointment by means of a bribe of 5,000 dinārs; a century later, another patriarch spent 7,000 dinārs for a similar purpose, and his successor did the same.

Of the literature produced during the Abbasid period it is only possible to give a brief sketch here. Not only was the number of individual authors very great, and the output of many of them enormous (*e.g.* as many as 70 works by Ghazālī are recorded and of the writings of Avicenna 99 have survived to us), but they left hardly any subject of human interest untouched. Some estimate of the immense literary activity of

this period may be formed from the "Index," compiled in 988 by an-Nadīm, of the Arabic books on every branch of knowledge extant in his day¹. It was in this period also that Arabic began to take on the characteristics of a world-literature, and became the literary medium of expression for others besides the Arabs themselves. Some of the most noteworthy contributions to this literature were made by Persians, and the decline of Syriac literature marks the ascendancy of Arabic. Not only did the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians tend more and more to prefer Arabic to Syriac as a literary language, but the heathen of Ḥarrān translated into Arabic much of the wisdom of the Greeks, and nearly all the scientific and philosophic works by Jews between the ninth and thirteenth centuries were written in the same language.

Of the poetry of the Abbasid period, only brief mention is possible here. While some poets continued to imitate the ancient models set in the pre-Islāmic odes and followed by writers of the Umayyad period, there were many more who grew weary of these antiquated conventions and poured scorn on what they considered to be the barbarisms of the desert. The most famous representative of the new school of poetry was Abū Nuwās (*ob. c. 810*), one the court poets of Hārūn; his poems in praise of love and wine made him notorious, and he took the lead among the licentious poets of that reign. In striking contrast to his rollicking contemporary was another poet who enjoyed the patronage of Hārūn, Abū l-'Atāhiyah (*ob. 828*), whose poetry is marked by a profound scepticism and a philosophic spirit of asceticism. The growing interest in religious and ethical problems and the encouragement given by the Abbasids to theological studies were not without their influence on poetry, and a great quantity of pietistic verse was produced; but with the widening of intellectual interest, poetry came indeed to reflect every aspect of the many-sided culture of this period. Two more names must be mentioned, that of Mutanabbi (*ob. 965*), in the judgment of most of his fellow-countrymen the greatest of the Muslim Arab poets, who was the panegyrist of the Ḥamdānid prince, Saif-ad-Daulah, the generous patron of Abū l-Faraj Isfahānī, Fārābī, and many other writers; and that of Abū l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī (*ob. 1058*), the sceptical blind poet, to whom Dr Nicholson has devoted an erudite and illuminating monograph².

Of the vast literature of the Abbasid period a large part is connected with those various branches of study that grew out of the efforts to elucidate the Koran. Tradition ascribes the composition of the earliest work on Arabic grammar to the fact that a learned scholar heard a man, quoting a verse of the Koran, make such a gross grammatical blunder as to turn the sense of the passage into blasphemy. But apart from the need of a scientific exposition of the language for an intelligent understanding of the Koran, Arabic was rapidly adopted, at least for purposes

¹ E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, I, 383 sqq.

² *Studies in Islamic Poetry*, chap. II. Cambridge. 1921.

of literary expression, by the subject races, and even the Arabs themselves, belonging to different tribes and speaking varying dialects in a foreign country, were in need of guidance if the purity of their speech was to be preserved. A school of grammarians sprang up during the Umayyad period in Baṣrah, which had been founded just after the conquest of 'Irāq as a great military station to command the approach from the sea, and a rival school arose later in the city of Kūfah, founded about the same time as a permanent camp on the desert side of the Euphrates. Two representatives of these schools may be mentioned here. Sibawaihi (*ob.* 793) wrote the first systematic exposition of Arabic grammar and had a long line of imitators in the Baṣrah school; to the school of Kūfah belonged Kisā'ī (*ob.* 805), whom Hārūn appointed tutor to his sons; both he and Sibawaihi were Persians by birth, and there is a record of their having met in controversy on points of grammar. By the early part of the ninth century these rival schools had lost their importance, and the leading grammarians were to be found in Baghdad.

The study of the Koran also gave a stimulus to the study of history, pre-eminently the life of the Prophet, and then of earlier prophets mentioned in the sacred text; to law, the primary source of which was the Koran; and to other branches of learning. The exegesis of the text of the Koran itself began as a branch of the science of tradition, and the oldest systematic collections of traditions, such as those of Bukhārī (*ob.* 870) and Tirmidhī (*ob.* 892), contain comments on the subject-matter of the Koran. Ṭabarī's (*ob.* 923) monumental commentary was epoch-making; it not only embodies the work of its predecessors in an exhaustive enumeration of traditional interpretations and lexicographical notes on the text, supported by quotations from pre-Islāmic poetical literature, but discusses difficulties of grammar and deals with questions of dogma and law. The commentaries produced by succeeding generations are without number, but among these special mention must be made of the *Kashshāf* of Zamakhsharī (*ob.* 1143), one of the greatest Arabic scholars of his time, though by birth a Persian; his work was exploited by succeeding generations of commentators, and their tribute to his erudition was the more remarkable since the author was a Mu'tazilite and had embodied in his work some of the heretical opinions of his sect. This great work formed the basis of the most widely studied commentary in the Muslim world to the present day, that of Baidāwī (*ob.* 1286).

The Muslim system of law claimed to be based on the Koran, but owing to the scarcity of material provided by the sacred text a distinct branch of Muslim study with an enormous literature of its own grew up, technically known as *Fiqh*. This deals not only with legal matters in the narrower sense of the term, *i.e.* criminal and civil law, the law of property and inheritance, constitutional law, and the principles of administration of the state and the conduct of war, but also with ritual and religious

observances and the innumerable details of the daily life falling under the consideration of a legal system that makes no distinction between the civil and the religious life of the believer. This system of law was developed largely under the influence of the Roman law which the Arabs found operative in Syria and Mesopotamia; in matters of ritual there were borrowings also from the Jewish law.

The religious character of the Abbasid dynasty gave an impulse to the systematic codification of Muslim law, and produced a vast literature embodying the different standpoints of the various schools of legists that grew up within the Sunnī sect to which the government belonged. By the end of the Abbasid period these had become narrowed down to the four that survive to the present day, but there had been others which became obsolete. These various schools differed mainly according to the place the legists allowed to independent judgment and the use of analogical deduction. In addition to the Sunnī schools, the other sects, particularly the Shī'ahs, developed legal systems of their own.

Dogmatic literature as distinct from exegesis and *fiqh* appears first to have grown up in connexion with the problems of the divine unity and its harmony with the attributes of God, and of the divine justice in relation to the problem of the freedom or determination of the human will. This dogmatic literature tended more and more to take on a metaphysical form as Muslim thinkers came under the influence of Greek thought, brought to their knowledge through versions of Neoplatonic and Aristotelean treatises translated into Arabic either from Syriac or directly from Greek. The writings of the earliest school of speculative theologians, the Mu'tazilites, have almost entirely perished, but the teachings of another liberal movement in theology which endeavoured to harmonise authority with reason and seems to have been connected with the Isma'īlian propaganda, have been preserved to us in the treatises of the so-called Brethren of Sincerity (made accessible to the European reader by Dieterici). They wrote towards the end of the tenth century and put forth an encyclopaedic scheme of human knowledge, dividing learning into three branches—the preliminary, the religious, and the philosophic studies; under the last heading they grouped propaedeutics (consisting of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music), logic, physics, and theology.

This group of thinkers appears to have been obliged to meet in secret, for the orthodox reaction, which received the support of the government under Mutawakkil (847–861) and found expression in the writings of Ash'arī (*ob.* 933), the founder of orthodox scholasticism, effectually crushed liberal movements in theology. Ash'arī had been brought up as a Mu'tazilite, but when he became converted to orthodoxy he adapted the dialectic methods of the philosophers to the defence of the orthodox position. A more popular exposition of the Ash'arite system of theology was given by Ghazālī (*ob.* 1111) who, in the reaction from arid scholasticism, took refuge in Sufism and gave mystical experience a place in his

reasoned exposition of orthodox doctrines. His literary activity was enormous, his best-known works being the autobiography of his spiritual experience in his *Deliverer from Error*, and the vast compendium of his religious system, *The Revivification of the Sciences of the Faith*.

Mysticism in Islām had had a long history before Ghazālī embodied it in a system of orthodox theology. Beginning as a purely ascetic movement, it came under foreign influences, notably Neoplatonic and Gnostic, and so took on more theosophic forms of expression. The teachings of the early Sufis were expressed in sayings handed down by their disciples; one of the oldest systematic treatises was the *Sustenance of the Souls* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (ob. 996), which was followed by a vast number of writings too numerous to be recorded here.

Historical literature had its origin in biographies of the Prophet and his companions. The foundations of this literature were laid in the Umayyad period, but the oldest extant biography of the Prophet, written by Ibn Ishāq, who died in 768 during the reign of the second Abbasid Caliph, has only survived to us in a recension of it made by Ibn Hishām (ob. 834), a distinguished grammarian. Another biographer of the Prophet, Wāqidi (ob. 822), enjoyed the patronage of Hārūn and wrote *The Book of the Wars*, a detailed account of the campaigns of the Prophet and the early successes of the Arab conquerors. His contemporary, Ibn Sa'd (ob. 844), wrote an immense biographical work containing a life of the Prophet and of the various classes of his companions and those who immediately followed them. Balādhuri (ob. 892) also wrote an account of the early Arab conquests, which is one of the most valuable sources for this early period, and began a vast biographical work on the life of the Prophet and his kinsmen, among whom the Abbasids are reckoned. Other historians took a larger range. Dīnawarī (ob. 895) in his *Book of the Long Histories* paid especial attention to the history of Persia, and Ya'qūbī, his contemporary, wrote a manual of universal history; but all these works were surpassed in extent by the monumental *Annals of the Apostles and the Kings* by Ṭabarī, whose commentary on the Koran has already been mentioned, a history of the world so far as it was of interest to a Muslim historian, from the creation to the year 915. His work was abridged by a later writer, Ibn al-Athīr (ob. 1234), who likewise wrote a history of the world, but from the beginning of the tenth century gives an independent record; he also wrote a history of the Atābegs of Mosul and an alphabetical dictionary entitled *Lions of the Jungle*, biographies of 7,500 companions of the Prophet.

Other biographers confined their attention to limited groups, e.g. the philosophers, scientists, physicians, or distinguished citizens of particular cities; but none of these equal the interest that attaches to the *Book of Songs* composed by Abū'l Faraj Iṣfahānī (ob. 967); beginning merely with a collection of songs composed by the most famous musicians at the

court of the Caliph Hārūn, it contains not only detailed and graphic accounts of poets and singers, but incidentally is one of the most important of our sources for the history of the culture of the Muslim world up to the ninth century.

An entirely new form of literary activity was introduced in a highly artificial form of rhymed prose, known as the Maqāmah. The use of rhyme is characteristic of the earliest work in Arabic prose known to us, the Koran, and as a literary device it runs through Arabic prose literature, finding special expression in pulpit oratory and the elevated epistolary style of official correspondence; but this style of composition gave rise to a distinct department of literature when Badī'uz-Zamān Hamadhānī (*ob.* 1007) conceived the idea of popularising it in a narrative of the adventures of a vagabond scholar, who suddenly appears in gatherings of wealthy persons and learned assemblies and by the display of his erudition gains for himself ample reward. The author makes such compositions an occasion for displaying his erudition by an abundant use of rare and obsolete words and recondite phrases, illustrating now the idiom of the Bedouins of the desert and now that of typical examples of the townsfolk; though clad in a garb of out-of-the-way learning, these compositions are full of humour and pointed satire against various classes of contemporary society. The fame of this work was, however, eclipsed by that of Ḥarīrī (*ob.* 1122), whose Maqāmāt are regarded as a masterpiece of Arabic literary style, full of all manner of rhetorical devices, verbal conceits, and verbal puzzles, intelligible only to trained students of grammar and philology. Ḥarīrī recounts the wanderings of a learned knave who also suddenly appears in all kinds of unexpected circumstances, and after a witty declaration, often in verse, as mysteriously disappears again. Ḥarīrī claimed that his work was not intended merely to amuse but had also a deeper moral purpose, and there are indeed passages in which his hero utters sentiments of the loftiest morals in language of great dignity and beauty.

Prose literature developed also in various other forms of *belles lettres*, notably in translations, such as the stories of Kalilah and Dimnah, largely under the stimulus of the varied foreign influences that met in the cultured society of Baghdad. Intellectual interest was widened until men of letters left no subject untouched; typical of such a wide intellectual outlook is the Mu'tazilite theologian Jāhiz (*ob.* 869) who, in his numerous writings, ranged over such subjects as theology, rhetoric, natural history (as in his *Book of Animals*), anthropology (in treatises that discussed the relative merits of the Arabs and the Turks), and studies of contemporary society (as in his *Book of Misers, of Young Gallants, of Scribes, of Singers*, etc). The influence of Jāhiz on Arabic prose literature was considerable; his pupil Mubarrad (*ob.* 898) collected in his Kāmil historical notices and examples of early poetry and prose, and such compilations became a recognised form of literary activity to which several

writers of genius devoted themselves. Akin to such writers in their wide intellectual outlook were the encyclopaedists, of whom Mas'ūdī (*ob.* 956) may be taken as an example. He spent a large part of his life in travel, and visited almost every part of Muslim Asia from Armenia to India and from the Caspian to Zanzibar. Everything that he saw interested him, and his reading was extensive and profound. In his latter years he composed a universal history from the Creation up to his own period, but his range was not confined to the conventional circle of Islāmic learning, for he studied the beliefs of rival creeds and the wisdom of the Indians, and enquired into puzzling problems of natural history, such as the source of the Nile and the phenomena of tides, and described the sea-serpent and the rhinoceros.

Mas'ūdī is typical of the mental curiosity which produced a rich scientific literature during the Abbasid period. The practical needs of administrators gave an impulse to the scientific study of geography, and the oldest geographical work in Arabic that has survived is an official handbook of *Roads and Countries* by a Persian postmaster, Ibn Khurdādhbih, who lived in the first half of the ninth century. The geographical literature that followed forms an important section of Arabic literature written by eager and close observers. Maqdisī, who wrote in 985, embodied in an attractive style the accumulated experience of twenty years of travel from Sind and Sistān in the East to Spain in the West. But the greatest of the Arab geographers was Yāqūt (*ob.* 1229), a Greek slave whose master had him educated in Baghdad; he lived a wandering life, finally settling down in Aleppo; among his other writings, he wrote a vast geographical dictionary and a biographical dictionary of learned men. Zakariyā of Qazwīn (*ob.* 1283) summed up the geographical knowledge of his time in a comprehensive cosmography, a kind of geographical encyclopaedia that deals not only with geography proper but also with astronomy, anthropology, and natural history; this book, translated into Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, was held to be the standard work on geographical sciences until a knowledge of Western learning penetrated the Muslim world.

Philosophy, as distinguished from theological scholasticism, begins with Kindī (*ob.* c. 873), one of the few writers of pure Arab descent who acquired distinction in letters during this period; but he was a translator rather than a constructive thinker, and among the two hundred treatises he wrote on such different subjects as astronomy, geometry, music, politics, and medicine, there are translations of parts of Aristotle's works and abridgments of others. For his pupil Aḥmad, a son of the Caliph Mu'taṣim, he prepared a version of the first work of Greek philosophy translated into Arabic; though this was actually made up of portions of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, it bore the misleading title of the *Theology of Aristotle*, and this absurd designation is responsible for much of the confusion prevailing in Arabic philosophy when attempts

were made to expound Aristotelean and Platonic doctrines. A more permanent influence on Muslim philosophic thought was exercised by Fārābī (*ob.* 950), a Turk, who pursued his studies in medicine, mathematics, and philosophy in Baghdad, but spent the last years of his life in Aleppo under the tolerant patronage of the Ḥamdānīd prince, Saif-ad-Daulah. Like Kindī, his literary activity was enormous, and included a number of commentaries upon Aristotle as well as independent expositions of metaphysical problems. He certainly presented a fuller exposition of Aristotelean doctrine than had hitherto been available in the Arabic language, but, as he, like Kindī, believed in the authenticity of the *Theology of Aristotle* and wrote several books to establish the agreement between the doctrines of Aristotle and Plato, his exposition of Aristotle is often incorrect. The brief aphoristic form in which he composed many of his treatises, and the mysticism that interpenetrates his thought, makes his system somewhat obscure. The Aristotelean doctrine received a much clearer and more methodical exposition in the writings of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (*ob.* 1037), whose philosophical development was first stimulated by the study of one of Fārābī's works. He was more concerned than his predecessor to attempt to reconcile the Aristotelean metaphysic with Muslim theology. The philosophy of Avicenna, however, belongs almost as much to Western medieval thought as to that of the Muslim East, and will be dealt with in another part of this work.

Henceforth, two distinct streams of philosophic thought manifest themselves; the Spanish philosophers Ibn Bājja (Avenpace) (*ob.* 1138), Ibn Tufail (Abubacer) (*ob.* 1185), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (*ob.* 1198), continued to work out philosophic problems in the West, but their influence was more profoundly felt in Christian Europe than in the Muslim East. Here, particularly in Persia, under the stimulus given to speculation by Ghazālī, the philosophers tended more and more to become orthodox; they studied Greek philosophy assiduously and were profoundly influenced by Greek logic, but they carried on a persistent attack upon separate Aristotelean doctrines in their defence of Muslim dogma. Fakhr-ud-Dīn Rāzī (*ob.* 1209), the author of the great commentary on the Koran, *The Keys of the Unseen*, was interpenetrated with Greek ideas, but both here and in his numerous philosophical works he developed the orthodox Ash'arite doctrines with a strong element of mysticism.

A strain of mysticism also characterises the idealistic philosophy of Shihāb-ud-Dīn Suhrawardī (*ob.* 1191), who attacked the position that truth could be attained by pure reason in his *Unveiling of the Greek Absurdities*, and in his philosophy of Illumination sought to reconcile with the theology of Islām the ancient Persian doctrine that identified light and spiritual substance. He founded a school of Persian metaphysics in which speculation and emotion were united and harmonised.

During the next century Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī (*ob.* 1273) also expounded Greek philosophy in the spirit of orthodox Muslim dogma, and had

numerous commentators who followed him in making similar use of Greek metaphysics and psychology. His contemporaries, Khawinjī (*ob.* 1248), Abharī (*ob.* 1264), and Kātibī (*ob.* 1276), wrote compendiums of logic, which have been text-books for centuries and have been commented upon by generations of scholars.

In the science of medicine also the Arabs were the pupils of the Greeks. The medical system of the Greeks had been studied in the great school of Jundī-Shāpūr during the Sasanian period, and from the day when the second Abbasid Caliph summoned Georgios, the son of Bukhtyishū', from Jundī-Shāpūr to Baghdad in 765, this Nestorian Christian family remained in high favour at the court for more than two centuries and a half. Either from Syriac or the original Greek, Christian physicians translated into Arabic the works of Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, and other authorities on medicine. Of these translators one of the most active was Ḥunain ibn Ishāq (*ob.* 873), known to medieval Europe as Johannitus; he belonged to a Christian Arab tribe, and studied first in Baghdad and later in Jundī-Shāpūr. Another city that produced translators from the Greek was Ḥarrān, the seat of a sect known as Sabaeans, to which belonged an active translator Thābit ibn Qurrah (*ob.* 901), whose sons and grandsons were also men of learning. Some knowledge of the Hindu system of medicine also appears to have reached Baghdad, and a summary of the Indian medicine is given by 'Alī ibn Rabbān, who in 850 compiled one of the earliest comprehensive works on medical science in Arabic, *The Paradise of Wisdom*. Arabic medical literature, however, is by no means limited to translations, and one of the most prolific contributors to this literature, Rāzī, who died in the early part of the tenth century, was a skilled clinical observer, and made distinctly original contributions to medical science. Out of the fifty works from his pen that are known to us, representing less than half of his writings, two were translated into Latin during the Middle Ages under the titles of the *Continens* and *Liber Almansoris*; the first, the *Hāwī*, is a work so enormous that only wealthy persons could afford to have copies made of it, and it consequently became rare; the other book takes its name from his patron, one of the Sāmānid princes of Khurāsān, to whom it was dedicated.

Another comprehensive system of medicine, known to the Middle Ages as the *Liber Regius* of Haly Abbas, was written by 'Alī ibn al-'Abbās, a Persian, for the Buwaihīd prince 'Aḍud-ud-Daulah (949-982). It was diligently studied until its fame was eclipsed by the *Qānūn* (Canon) of Avicenna, who was as great a physician as he was a philosopher, and out of his 99 works that have survived this was the one most widely studied, not only in the East but also in the West, since Gerard of Cremona translated it in the twelfth century. Professor Browne says of this book: "Its encyclopaedic character, its systematic arrangement, its philosophic plan, perhaps even its dogmatism, combined with the immense reputation of its author in other fields besides medicine, raised it to a unique

position in the medical literature of the Muslim world, so that the earlier works of ar-Rāzī and al-Majūsī, in spite of their undoubted merits, were practically abrogated by it, and it is still regarded in the East by the followers of the old Greek medicine, the *Ṭibb-i-Yūnānī*, as the last appeal on all matters connected with the healing art.”¹ From the tenth century onward Spain produced a number of great physicians, who, of course, wrote in Arabic; while in Persia, the birth-place of the Arabic authors above mentioned, Rāzī, ‘Alī ibn al-‘Abbās, and Avicenna, a vast medical literature in the Persian language began with an encyclopaedia by a physician named Zain-ud-Dīn Ismā‘īl, entitled the *Dhakīra-i Khwārazmshāhī*, in honour of his patron who was governor of Khwārazm (or Khiva) under the Seljūq Sultan Sanjar.

In the Middle Ages students of science often endeavoured to be encyclopaedic, and several of the philosophers and physicians mentioned above devoted their attention to other branches of learning. As in the case of philosophy and medicine, the first impulse came from translations. These were for the most part made from Greek writings by Syrian Christians or by the so-called Sabaeans of Ḥarrān; but Sanskrit literature provided the earliest material, for an Indian in 771 brought to Manṣūr, the founder of Baghdad, a work on astronomy, which this Caliph ordered to be translated into Arabic, and shortly afterwards astronomical tables compiled under the Sasanians were translated from the Pahlavi. A great impulse to this work of translation was given by the Caliph Ma’mūn (813–833), who organised it by establishing a special translation bureau, to which skilled translators were attracted by offers of large salaries and were employed in rendering into Arabic works on geometry, astronomy, engineering, music, and the like. The names of several of the translators who worked for him are known; among them was Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārazmī, one of whose works translated into Latin at the beginning of the twelfth century under the title *Algoritmi de numero Indorum* introduced the Arabic numerals into Europe, while his treatise on algebra was in use in the West up to the sixteenth century. These men were not translators merely; their own writings gave an impulse to mathematical and astronomical studies, which produced fruitful results in the advancement of these branches of knowledge. Astronomy especially was zealously studied, not only for its own sake but because of its connexion with astrology, and astronomers continued to enjoy the patronage of the more barbarous Turkish and Mongol dynasties that dispossessed the Arab Caliphate; among these may be mentioned Omar Khayyām, known in modern times for his Persian poetry, who reformed the calendar in 1079, while as an astronomer he was in the service of the Seljūq Sultan Malik Shāh. Among astronomers may also be mentioned one of the greatest intellects of the eleventh century, Berūnī (*ob.* 1048); he dedicated to

¹ *Arabian Medicine*, p. 62. Cambridge. 1921.

the Sultan Mas'ūd ibn Maḥmūd of Ghaznah a complete account of the science of astronomy, and wrote a number of smaller astronomical treatises dealing with the astrolabe and the planisphere. His profound knowledge of astronomy also reveals itself in his work on the calendars of different nations. But perhaps the greatest monument of his erudition that this remarkable man has left is his book on India, in which he gives an account of the religion, philosophy, astronomy, and customs of the Hindus, based upon a wide acquaintance with Sanskrit literature and upon his own personal observations. Naṣīr-ud-Dīn Ṭūsī, to whom reference has already been made as a philosophical writer, was in charge of an observatory at Marghah, several of the instruments in which he himself had invented; in 1270 he dedicated to his patron the Mongol prince Hūlāgū astronomical tables based on observations of the planets for twelve years, for in the midst of the appalling devastation that the Mongols inflicted upon Muslim culture—a ruin from which it has never recovered—they extended their patronage to one science at least, astronomy.

(B)

THE SELJŪQS.

THE rise of the Seljūq power and the history of the various dynasties which were established by princes of that family deserve attention for more than one reason. Not only were the Seljūqs largely responsible for the consolidation of Islām during the later days of the Abbasid Caliphate, but it is from this revival of power, which was, in no small degree, due to their efforts, that the failure of the Crusaders to make any lasting impression on the East may be traced. Further, it is not alone in politics and warfare that the Seljūqs achieved success: they have laid mankind under a debt in other spheres. Their influence may be observed in religion, art, and learning. Their love of culture was shewn by the universities which sprang up in their cities and in the crowds of learned men fostered at their courts. Under them appeared some of the shining lights of Islām. The philosopher and statesman Niẓām-al-Mulk, the mathematician-poet Omar Khayyām, warriors like Zangī, sultans like Malik Shāh, Nūr-ad-Dīn, and it is right to include Saladin himself, were the product of the Seljūq renaissance. To the Seljūq princes there can be ascribed, to a great extent, not only the comparative failure of the Crusades, but an unconscious influence of East upon West, springing from the intercourse between Frank and Saracen in the holy wars. The rise of the Seljūq power

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES OF PERIODICALS, SOCIETIES, ETC.

(1) The following abbreviations are used for titles of periodicals :

- AB. *Analecta Bollandiana*. Brussels.
 AHR. *American Historical Review*. New York and London.
 AKKR. *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht*. Mayence.
 AMur. *Archivio Muratoriano*. Rome.
 Arch. Ven. (and N. Arch. Ven. ; Arch. Ven.-Tri.). *Archivio veneto*. Venice. 40 vols. 1871-90. Continued as *Nuovo archivio veneto*. 1st series. 20 vols. 1891-1900. New series. 42 vols. 1901-1921. And *Archivio veneto-tridentino*. 1922 ff., in progress.
 ASAK. *Anzeiger für schweizerische Alterthumskunde*. Zurich.
 ASHF. *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*. Paris.
 ASI. *Archivio storico italiano*. Florence. Ser. i. 20 v. and App. 9 v. 1842-53. Index. 1857. Ser. nuova. 18 v. 1855-63. Ser. iii. 26 v. 1865-77. Indexes to ii and iii. 1874. Suppt. 1877. Ser. iv. 20 v. 1878-87. Index. 1891. Ser. v. 49 v. 1888-1912. Index. 1900. Anni 71 etc. 1913 ff., in progress. (Index in Catalogue of The London Library vol. i. 1913.)
 ASL. *Archivio storico lombardo*. Milan.
 ASPN. *Archivio storico per le province napoletane*. Naples. 1876 ff.
 ASRSP. *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria*. Rome.
 BISI. *Bullettino dell' Istituto storico italiano*. Rome. 1886 ff.
 BRAH. *Boletín de la R. Academia de la historia*. Madrid.
 BZ. *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. Leipsic. 1892 ff.
 CQR. *Church Quarterly Review*. London.
 CR. *Classical Review*. London.
 DZG. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*. Freiburg-im-Breisgau.
 DZKR. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht*. Leipsic.
 EHR. *English Historical Review*. London.
 FDG. *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*. Göttingen.
 HJ. *Historisches Jahrbuch*. Munich.
 HVJS. *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*. Leipsic.
 HZ. *Historische Zeitschrift* (von Sybel). Munich and Berlin.
 JA. *Journal Asiatique*. Paris.
 JB. *Jahresberichte der Geschichtswissenschaft im Auftrage der historischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin*. Berlin. 1878 ff.
 JHS. *Journal of Hellenic Studies*. London.
 JRAS. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain*. London.
 JSG. *Jahrbuch für schweizerische Geschichte*. Zurich.
 JTS. *Journal of Theological Studies*. London.
 MA. *Le moyen âge*. Paris.
 MIOGF. *Mittheilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*. Innsbruck.
 Neu. Arch. *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* Hanover and Leipsic.
 NRDF. *Nouvelle Revue historique du droit français*. Paris.
 QFIA. *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*. Rome.
 RA. *Revue archéologique*. Paris.

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| RBén. | Revue bénédictine. Maredsous. |
| RCHL. | Revue critique d'histoire et de littérature. Paris. |
| RH. | Revue historique. Paris. |
| RHD. | Revue d'histoire diplomatique. Paris. |
| RHE. | Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique. Louvain. |
| Rhein. Mus. | Rheinisches Museum für Philologie. Frankfort-on-Main. |
| RN. | Revue de numismatique. Paris. |
| RQCA. | Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte. Rome. |
| RQH. | Revue des questions historiques. Paris. |
| RSH. | Revue de synthèse historique. Paris. |
| RSI. | Rivista storica italiana. Turin. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| SKAW. | Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vienna. [Philos.-hist. Classe.] |
| SPAW. | Sitzungsberichte der kön. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin. |
| TRHS. | Transactions of the Royal Historical Society. London. |
| VV. | Vizantiyski Vremennik (Византийское время). St Petersburg (Petrograd). 1894 ff. |
| ZCK. | Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst. Düsseldorf. |
| ZDMG. | Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft. Leipsic. |
| ZKG. | Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte. Gotha. |
| ZKT. | Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie. Gotha. |
| ZMNP. | Zhurnal ministerstva narodnago prosvèshcheniya (Journal of the Ministry of Public Instruction). St Petersburg. |
| ZR. | Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte. Weimar. 1861-78. Continued as |
| ZSR. | Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtswissenschaft. Weimar. 1880 ff. |
| ZWT. | Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie. Frankfort-on-Main. |

(2) Other abbreviations used are :

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| AcadIBL. | Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. |
| AcadIP. | Académie Impériale de Pétersbourg. |
| AllgDB. | Allgemeine deutsche Biographie. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| ASBen. | <i>See</i> Mabillon and Achery <i>in Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| ASBoll. | Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| BEC. | Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| BGén. | Nouvelle Biographie générale. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| BHE. | Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| Bouquet. | <i>See</i> Rerum Gallicarum...scriptores <i>in Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| BUniv. | Biographie universelle. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| Coll. textes. | Collection des textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| CSCO. | Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| CSEL. | Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| CSHB. | Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| DNB. | Dictionary of National Biography. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| EcfrAR. | Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome. Paris. |
| EncBr. | Encyclopaedia Britannica. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| Ersch-Gruber. | Ersch and Gruber's Allgemeine Encyclopädie. <i>See Gen. Bibl. 1.</i> |
| Fonti. | Fonti per la storia d'Italia. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| Jaffé. | <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| KAW. | Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vienna. |
| Mansi. | <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| MEC. | Mémoires et documents publ. par l'École des Chartes. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| MGH. | Monumenta Germaniae Historica. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| MHP. | Monumenta historiae patriae. Turin. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| MHSM. | Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium. <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |
| MPG. | Migne's Patrologiae cursus completus. Ser. graeco-latina. [Greek texts with Latin translations in parallel columns.] <i>See Gen. Bibl. iv.</i> |

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| MPL. | Migne's Patrologiae cursus completus. Ser. latina. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |
| PAW. | Königliche preussische Akademie d. Wissenschaften. Berlin. |
| RAH. | Real Academia de la Historia. Madrid. |
| RC. | Record Commissioners. |
| RE ³ . | Real-Encyclopädie für protestantische Theologie, etc. <i>See Herzog and Hauck in Gen. Bibl.</i> i. |
| Rec. hist. Cr. | Recueil des historiens des Croisades. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |
| RGS. | Royal Geographical Society. |
| RHS. | Royal Historical Society. |
| Rolls. | Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi scriptores. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |
| RR.II.SS. | <i>See Muratori in Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |
| SGUS. | Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum. <i>See Monumenta Germaniae Historica in Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |
| SHF. | Société d'histoire française. |
| SRD. | Scriptores rerum Danicarum medii aevi. <i>See Gen. Bibl.</i> iv. |

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| Abh. | Abhandlungen. | mem. | memoir. |
| antiq. | antiquarian, antiquaire. | mém. | mémoire. |
| app. | appendix. | n.s. | new series. |
| coll. | collection. | publ. | published, publié. |
| diss. | dissertation. | R. } | reale. |
| hist. | history, historical, historique, historisch. | r. } | |
| Jahrb. | Jahrbuch. | roy. | royal, royale. |
| k. | { kaiserlich. königlich. | ser. | series. |
| | | soc. | society, société, società. |
| | | Viert. | Vierteljahrschrift. |

CHAPTER X.

(A)

MUSLIM CIVILISATION DURING THE ABBASID PERIOD.

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(a) MUSLIM.

(i) *Arabic.*

(In chronological order.)

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(ii) *Persian.*

(In chronological order.)

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(b) CHRISTIAN.

(i) *Syriac.*

(In chronological order.)

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF

LEADING EVENTS MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME

- 330 (11 May) Inauguration of Constantinople, 'New Rome,' by Constantine the Great.
- 428-633 Persian rule in Armenia.
- 476 Deposition of Romulus Augustus.
- 529 Justinian's Code.
- 533 Justinian's *Digest* and *Institutes*.
- 535 Justinian's *Novels*.
- 537 Inauguration of St Sophia.
- 558 The Avars appear in Europe.
- 565 Death of Justinian.
- 568 The Lombards invade Italy.
The Avars enter Pannonia.
- c. 582 Creation of the exarchates of Africa and Ravenna.
- 626 The Avars besiege Constantinople.
- 627 Defeat of the Persians by Heraclius at Nineveh.
- 631 The Avars defeat the Bulgarians.
- 633-693 Byzantine rule in Armenia.
- 635 The Bulgarians free themselves from the power of the Chazars.
- c. 650 Creation of the Asiatic themes.
- 679 Establishment of the Bulgarians south of the Danube.
- 693-862 Arab rule in Armenia.
- 713 First Venetian Doge elected.
- 717 (25 March) Accession of Leo III the Isaurian.
- 717-718 The Arabs besiege Constantinople.
- 726 Edict against images.
- 727 Insurrections in Greece and Italy.
- 732 Victory of Charles Martel at Poitiers (Tours).
- 739 Battle of Acroinon.
- 740 Publication of the *Ecloga*.
Death of Leo III the Isaurian, and accession of Constantine V Copronymus.
- 741 Insurrection of Artavasdus.
- 742 (2 Nov.) Recovery of Constantinople by Constantine V.
- 744 Murder of Walid II. The Caliphate falls into anarchy.
- 747 Annihilation of the Egyptian fleet.
- 750 Foundation of the Abbasid Caliphate.
- 751 Taking of Ravenna by the Lombards.
- 753 Iconoclastic Council of Hieria.
- 754 Donation of Pepin to the Papacy.
- 755 The war with the Bulgarians begins.
- 756 'Abd-ar-Rahmān establishes an independent dynasty in Spain.
- 757 Election of Pope Paul IV. Ratification of Papal elections ceases to be asked of the Emperor of the East.
- 758 Risings of the Slavs of Thrace and Macedonia.
- 759 Defeat of the Bulgarians at Marcellae.
- 762 Baghdad founded by the Caliph Maṣṣūr.
Defeat of the Bulgarians at Anchialus.
- 764-771 Persecution of the image-worshippers.
- 772 Defeat of the Bulgarians at Lithosoria.

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- 774 Annexation of the Lombard kingdom by Charlemagne.
 775 (14 Sept.) Death of the Emperor Constantine V and accession of Leo IV the Chazar.
 780 (8 Sept.) Death of Leo IV and Regency of Irene.
 781 Pope Hadrian I ceases to date official acts by the regnal years of the Emperor.
 787 Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. Condemnation of Iconoclasm.
 788 Establishment of the Idrisid dynasty in Morocco.
 790 (Dec.) Abdication of Irene. Constantine VI assumes power.
 797 (17 July) Deposition of Constantine VI. Irene becomes Emperor.
 800 Establishment of the Aghlabid dynasty in Tunis.
 (25 Dec.) Charlemagne crowned Emperor of the West.
 802 (31 Oct.) Deposition of Irene and accession of Nicephorus I.
 803 Destruction of the Barmecides.
 809 Death of Hārūn ar-Rashid and civil war in the Caliphate.
 The Bulgarian Khan Krum invades the Empire.
 Pepin of Italy's attack upon Venice.
 810 Nicephorus I's scheme of financial reorganisation.
 Concentration of the lagoon-townships at Rialto.
 811 The Emperor Nicephorus I is defeated and slain by the Bulgarians: accession of Michael I Rangabé.
 812 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle recognises Charlemagne's imperial title.
 813 Michael I defeated at Versinicia: Krum appears before Constantinople.
 Deposition of Michael I and accession of Leo V the Armenian.
 Battle of Mesembria.
 Ma'mūn becomes sole Caliph.
 814 (14 April) Death of Krum: peace between the Empire and the Bulgarians.
 815 Iconoclastic synod of Constantinople.
 Banishment of Theodore of Studion.
 820 (25 Dec.) Murder of Leo V, and accession of Michael II the Amorian.
 822 Insurrection of Thomas the Slavonian.
 826 Death of Theodore of Studion.
 Conquest of Crete by the Arabs.
 827 Arab invasion of Sicily.
 829-842 Reign of Theophilus.
 832 Edict of Theophilus against images.
 833 Death of the Caliph Ma'mūn.
 836 The Abbasid capital removed from Baghdad to Sāmarrā.
 839 Treaty between the Russians and the Greeks.
 840 Treaty of Pavia between the Emperor Lothar I and Venice.
 842 The Arabs take Messina.
 Disintegration of the Caliphate begins.
 842-867 Reign of Michael III.
 843 Council of Constantinople, and final restoration of image-worship by the Empress Theodora.
 846 Ignatius becomes Patriarch.
 852-893 Reign of Boris in Bulgaria.
 856-866 Rule of Bardas.
 858 Deposition of Ignatius and election of Photius as Patriarch.
 860 The Russians appear before Constantinople.
 860-861 (?) Cyril's mission to the Chazars.
 863 (?) Mission of Cyril and Methodius to the Moravians.
 864 Conversion of Bulgaria to orthodoxy.
 867 The Schism of Photius.
 The Synod of Constantinople completes the rupture with Rome.
 (23 Sept.) Murder of Michael III and accession of Basil I the Macedonian.
 Deposition of Photius. Restoration of Ignatius.
 867 (13 Nov.) Death of Pope Nicholas I.
 (14 Dec.) Election of Pope Hadrian II.
 868 Independence of Egypt under the ʿTūlūnid dynasty.

- 869 (14 Feb.) Death of Cyril.
Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. End of the Schism.
- 870 Methodius becomes the first Moravo-Pannonian archbishop.
- 871 War with the Paulicians.
- 876 Capture of Bari from the Saracens by the Greeks.
- 877 Death of Ignatius and reinstatement of Photius as Patriarch.
(22 July) Council of Ravenna.
- 878 (21 May) Capture of Syracuse by the Arabs.
- 878 (?) Promulgation of the *Prochiron*.
- 882 Fresh rupture between the Eastern and Western Churches; excommunication of Photius.
- 885 (6 April) Death of Methodius.
- 886-912 Reign of Leo VI the Wise.
- 886 Deposition and exile of Photius.
- 887-892 Reign of Ashot I in Armenia.
- c. 888 Publication of the *Basilics*.
- 891 Death of Photius.
- 892 The Abbasid capital restored to Baghdad.
- 892-914 Reign of Smbat I in Armenia.
- 893-927 Reign of Simeon in Bulgaria.
- 895-896 The Magyars migrate into Hungary.
- 898 Reconciliation between the Eastern and Western Churches.
- 899 The Magyars invade Lombardy.
- 900 Victory of Nicephorus Phocas at Adana.
The Magyars occupy Pannonia.
- 902 (1 Aug.) Fall of Taormina, the last Greek stronghold in Sicily.
- 904 Thessalonica sacked by the Saracens.
- 906 Leo VI's fourth marriage: contest with the Patriarch.
The Magyars overthrow the Great Moravian State.
- 907 Russian expedition against Constantinople.
- 909-1171 The Fatimid Caliphate in Africa.
- 912 (11 May) Death of Leo VI and accession of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus under the regency of Alexander.
- 913 Simeon of Bulgaria appears before Constantinople.
- 915-928 Reign of Ashot II in Armenia.
- 917 (20 Aug.) Bulgarian victory at Anchialus.
- 919 (25 Mar.) Usurpation of Romanus Lecapenus.
- 920 (June) A Council at Constantinople pronounces upon fourth marriages.
- 923 Simeon besieges Constantinople.
- 927 (8 Sept.) Peace with Bulgaria.
- 932 Foundation of the Buwaihid dynasty.
- 933 Venice establishes her supremacy in Istria.
- 941 Russian expedition against Constantinople.
- 944 (16 Dec.) Deposition of Romanus Lecapenus. Personal rule of Constantine VII begins.
- 945 The Buwaihids enter Baghdad and control the Caliphate.
- 954 Princess Olga of Russia embraces Christianity.
- 955 Battle of the Lechfeld.
- 959 (9 Nov.) Death of Constantine VII and accession of Romanus II.
- 959-976 Reign of the Doge Peter IV Candianus.
- 961 Recovery of Crete by Nicephorus Phocas.
(Mar.) Advance in Asia by the Greeks.
Athanasius founds the convent of St Laura on Mt Athos.
- 963 (15 Mar.) Death of Romanus II: accession of Basil II: regency of Theophano.
(16 Aug.) Usurpation of Nicephorus II Phocas.
- 964 *Novel* against the monks.
- 965 Conquest of Cilicia.
- 967 Renewal of the Bulgarian war.
- 968 The Russians in Bulgaria.

- 969 (28 Oct.) Capture of Antioch.
The Fātimid Caliphs annex Egypt.
(10 Dec.) Murder of Nicephorus Phocas and accession of John Tzimisce.
- 970 Capture of Aleppo.
Accession of Géza as Prince of the Magyars.
- 971 Revolt of Bardas Phocas.
The Emperor John Tzimisce annexes Eastern Bulgaria.
- 972 Death of Svyatoslav of Kiev.
- 976 (10 Jan.) Death of John Tzimisce: personal rule of Basil II Bulgar-
octonus begins.
Peter Orseolo I elected Doge.
- 976-979 Revolt of Bardas Sclerus.
- 980 Accession of Vladímir in Russia.
- 985 Fall of the eunuch Basil.
- 986-1018 Great Bulgarian War.
- 987-989 Conspiracy of Phocas and Sclerus.
- 988 The Fātimid Caliphs occupy Syria.
- 989 Baptism of Vladímir of Russia.
Vladímir captures Cherson.
- 991 The Fātimids re-occupy Syria.
- 991-1009 Reign of Peter Orseolo II as Doge.
- 992 (19 July) First Venetian treaty with the Eastern Empire.
- 994 Saif-ad-Daulah takes Aleppo and establishes himself in Northern Syria.
- 994-1001 War with the Fātimids.
- 995 Basil II's campaign in Syria.
- 996 (Jan.) *Novel* against the Powerful.
Defeat of the Bulgarians on the Spercheus.
- 997 Accession of St Stephen in Hungary, and conversion of the Magyars.
- 998-1030 Reign of Maḥmūd of Ghaznah.
- 1006 Vladímir of Russia makes a treaty with the Bulgarians.
- 1009 The Patriarch Sergius erases the Pope's name from the diptychs.
- 1014 Battle of Cimbalongu; death of the Tsar Samuel.
- 1015 Death of Vladímir of Russia.
- 1018-1186 Bulgaria a Byzantine province.
- 1021-1022 Annexation of Vaspurakan to the Empire.
- 1024 The Patriarch Eustathius attempts to obtain from the Pope the autonomy
of the Greek Church.
- 1025 (15 Dec.) Death of Basil II and accession of Constantine VIII.
- 1026 Fall of the Orseoli at Venice.
- 1028 (11 Nov.) Death of Constantine VIII and succession of Zoë and
Romanus III Argyrus.
- 1030 Defeat of the Greeks near Aleppo.
- 1031 Capture of Edessa by George Maniaces.
- 1034 (12 April) Murder of Romanus III and accession of Michael IV the
Paphlagonian.
Government of John the Orphanotrophos.
- 1038 Death of St Stephen of Hungary.
Success of George Maniaces in Sicily.
The Seljūq Tughril Beg proclaimed.
- 1041 (10 Dec.) Death of Michael IV and succession of Michael V Calaphates.
Banishment of John the Orphanotrophos.
- 1042 (21 April) Revolution in Constantinople; fall of Michael V.
Zoë and Theodora joint Empresses.
(11-12 June) Zoë's marriage; accession of her husband, Constantine IX
Monomachus.
- 1043 Michael Cerularius becomes Patriarch.
Rising of George Maniaces; his defeat and death at Ostrovo.
- 1045 Foundation of the Law School of Constantinople.
- 1046 Annexation of Armenia (Ani) to the Empire.
- 1047 Revolt of Tornicius.

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- 1048 Appearance of the Seljūqs on the eastern frontier of the Empire.
 - 1050 Death of the Empress Zoë.
 - 1054 (20 July) The Patriarch Michael Cerularius breaks with Rome; schism between the Eastern and Western Churches.
 - 1055 (11 Jan.) Death of Constantine IX; Theodora sole Empress.
The Seljūq Tughril Beg enters Baghdad.
 - 1056 (31 Aug.) Death of Theodora and proclamation of Michael VI Stratioticus.
 - 1057 Revolt of Isaac Comnenus. Deposition of Michael VI.
(1 Sept. ?) Isaac I Comnenus crowned Emperor at Constantinople.
 - 1058 Deposition and death of Michael Cerularius.
 - 1059 Treaty of Melî.
Abdication of Isaac Comnenus.
 - 1059-1067 Reign of Constantine X Ducas.
 - 1063 Death of Tughril Beg.
 - 1063-1072 Reign of the Seljūq Alp Arslân.
 - 1064 Capture of Ani by the Seljūqs, and conquest of Greater Armenia.
 - 1066 Foundation of the Nîzamîyah University at Baghdad.
 - 1067-1071 Reign of Romanus III Diogenes.
 - 1071 Capture of Bari by the Normans and loss of Italy.
Battle of Manzikert.
The Seljūqs occupy Jerusalem.
 - 1071-1078 Reign of Michael VII Parapinaces Ducas.
 - 1072-1092 Reign of the Seljūq Malik Shâh.
 - 1077 Accession of Sulaimân I, Sultan of Rûm.
 - 1078 The Turks at Nicaea.
 - 1078-1081 Reign of Nicephorus III Botaniates.
 - 1080 Alliance between Robert Guiscard and Pope Gregory VII.
Foundation of the Armeno-Cilician kingdom.
 - 1081-1118 Reign of Alexius I Comnenus.
 - 1081-1084 Robert Guiscard's invasion of Epirus.
 - 1082 Treaty with Venice.
 - 1086 Incursions of the Patzinaks begin.
 - 1091 (29 April) Defeat of the Patzinaks at the river Leburnium.
 - 1094-1095 Invasion of the Cumans.
 - 1094 Council of Piacenza.
 - 1095 (18-28 Nov.) Council of Clermont proclaims the First Crusade.
 - 1096 The Crusaders at Constantinople.
 - 1097 The Crusaders capture Nicaea.
 - 1098 Council of Bari. St Anselm refutes the Greeks.
 - 1099 Establishment of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
 - 1100 (18 July) Death of Godfrey of Bouillon.
 - 1104 Defeat of the Crusaders at Harrân.
 - 1107 Bohemond's expedition against Constantinople.
 - 1108 Battle of Durazzo.
Treaty with Bohemond.
 - 1116 Battle of Philomelium.
 - 1118-1143 Reign of John II Comnenus.
 - 1119 First expedition of John Comnenus to Asia Minor.
 - 1122 Defeat of the Patzinaks near Eski-Sagra.
 - 1122-1126 War with Venice.
 - 1128 The Emperor John Comnenus defeats the Hungarians near Haram.
 - 1137 (May) Roger II of Sicily's fleet defeated off Trani.
 - 1137-1138 Campaign of John Comnenus in Cilicia and Syria.
 - 1143-1180 Reign of Manuel I Comnenus.
 - 1147-1149 The Second Crusade.
 - 1147-1149 War with Roger II of Sicily.
 - 1151 The Byzantines at Ancona.
 - 1152-1154 Hungarian War.
 - 1154 Death of Roger II of Sicily.

- 1158 Campaign of Manuel Comnenus in Syria.
 1159 His solemn entry into Antioch; zenith of his power.
 1163 Expulsion of the Greeks from Cilicia.
 1164 Battle of Hārim.
 1168 Annexation of Dalmatia.
 1170 The Emperor Manuel attempts to re-unite the Greek and Armenian Churches.
 1171 Rupture of Manuel with Venice.
 1173 Frederick Barbarossa besieges Ancona.
 1176 Battle of Myriocephalum.
 Battle of Legnano.
 1177 Peace of Venice.
 1180-1183 Reign of Alexius II Comnenus.
 1180 Foundation of the Serbian monarchy by Stephen Nemanja.
 1182 Massacre of Latins in Constantinople.
 1183 (Sept.) Andronicus I Comnenus becomes joint Emperor.
 (Nov.) Murder of Alexius II.
 1185 The Normans take Thessalonica.
 Deposition and death of Andronicus; accession of Isaac II Angelus.
 1185-1219 Reign of Leo II the Great of Cilicia.
 1186 Second Bulgarian Empire founded.
 1187 Saladin captures Jerusalem.
 1189 Sack of Thessalonica.
 1189-1192 Third Crusade.
 1190 Death of Frederick Barbarossa in the East.
 Isaac Angelus defeated by the Bulgarians.
 1191 Occupation of Cyprus by Richard Coeur-de-Lion.
 1192 Guy de Lusignan purchases Cyprus from Richard I.
 1193-1205 Reign of the Doge Enrico Dandolo.
 1195 Deposition of Isaac II; accession of Alexius III Angelus.
 1197-1207 The Bulgarian Tsar Johannitsa (Kalojan).
 1201 (April) Fourth Crusade. The Crusaders' treaty with Venice.
 (May) Boniface of Montferrat elected leader of the Crusade.
 1203 (17 July) The Crusaders enter Constantinople.
 Deposition of Alexius III; restoration of Isaac II with Alexius IV Angelus.
 1203-1227 Empire of Jenghiz Khan.
 1204 (8 Feb.) Deposition of Isaac II and Alexius IV; accession of Alexius V Ducas (Mourtzouphlos).
 (13 April) Sack of Constantinople.
 (16 May) Coronation of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and foundation of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.
 The compulsory union of the Eastern and Western Churches.
 The Venetians purchase the island of Crete.
 Alexius Comnenus founds the state of Trebizond.
 1205 (14 April) The Bulgarians defeat the Emperor Baldwin I at Hadrianople.
 1206 (21 Aug.) Henry of Flanders crowned Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 Theodore I Lascaris crowned Emperor of Nicaea.
 1208 Peace with the Bulgarians.
 1210 The Turks of Rûm defeated on the Maeander by Theodore Lascaris.
 1212 Peace with Nicaea.
 1215 The Fourth Lateran Council.
 1216 Death of the Emperor Henry, and succession of Peter of Courtenay.
 1217 Stephen crowned King of Serbia.
 1218 Death of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia.
 1219 Creation of a separate Serbian Church.
 1221-1228 Reign of Robert of Courtenay, Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1222 Recovery of Thessalonica by the Greeks of Epirus.
 Death of Theodore Lascaris, Emperor of Nicaea. Accession of John III Vatatzes.

- 1222 First appearance of the Mongols in Europe.
 1224 The Emperor of Nicaea occupies Hadrianople.
 1228 Death of Stephen, the first King of Serbia.
 1228-1237 Reign of John of Brienne, Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1230 Destruction of the Greek Empire of Thessalonica by the Bulgarians.
 1234 Fall of the Kin Dynasty in China.
 1235 Revival of the Bulgarian Patriarchate.
 1236 Constantinople attacked by the Greeks and Bulgarians.
 1236 (?) Alliance between the Armenians and the Mongols.
 1237 Invasion of Europe by the Mongols.
 1237-1261 Reign of Baldwin II, last Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
 1241 Battles of Liegnitz and Mohi.
 Death of John Asén II; the decline of Bulgaria begins.
 1244 The Despotat of Thessalonica becomes a vassal of Nicaea.
 1245 Council of Lyons.
 1246 Reconquest of Macedonia from the Bulgarians.
 1254 (30 Oct.) Death of John Vatatzes; Theodore II Lascaris succeeds as Emperor of Nicaea.
 Submission of the Despot of Epirus to Nicaea.
 Mamlük Sultans in Egypt.
 1255-1256 Theodore II's Bulgarian campaigns.
 1256 Overthrow of the Assassins by the Mongols.
 1258 Death of Theodore II Lascaris. Accession of John IV Lascaris.
 Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols and overthrow of the Caliphate.
 1259 (1 Jan.) Michael VIII Palaeologus proclaimed Emperor of Nicaea.
 1259-1294 Reign of Kublai Khan.
 1260 The Egyptians defeat the Mongols at 'Ain Jalût.
 1261 (25 July) Capture of Constantinople by the Greeks; end of the Latin Empire.
 1261-1530 Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo.
 1266 (Feb.) Charles of Anjou's victory over Manfred at Benevento.
 1267 (27 May) Treaty of Viterbo.
 1267-1272 Progress of Charles of Anjou in Epirus.
 1270 (25 Aug.) Death of St Louis.
 1274 Ecumenical Council at Lyons; union of the Churches again achieved.
 1276 Leo III of Cilicia defeats the Mamlüks.
 1278 Leo III of Cilicia defeats the Seljûqs of Iconium.
 1281 Joint Mongol and Armenian forces defeated by the Mamlüks on the Orontes.
 (18 Nov.) Excommunication of Michael Palaeologus; breach of the Union.
 Victory of the Berat over the Angevins.
 1282 (30 May) The Sicilian Vespers.
 (11 Dec.) Death of Michael Palaeologus. Accession of Andronicus II.
 c. 1290 Foundation of Wallachia.
 1291 Fall of Acre.
 1299 Osmân, Emir of the Ottoman Turks.
 1302 Osmân's victory at Baphaeum.
 End of the alliance between the Armenians and the Mongols.
 1302-1311 The Catalan Grand Company in the East.
 1308 Turks enter Europe.
 Capture of Ephesus by the Turks.
 1309 Capture of Rhodes from the Turks by the Knights of St John.
 1311 Battle of the Cephisus.
 1326 Brûsa surrenders to the Ottoman Turks.
 (Nov.) Death of Osmân.
 1326-1359 Reign of Orkhân.
 1328-1341 Reign of Andronicus III Palaeologus.
 1329 The Ottomans capture Nicaea.
 1330 (28 June) Defeat of the Bulgarians by the Serbians at the battle of Velbužd.

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- 1331 (8 Sept.) Coronation of Stephen Dušan as King of Serbia.
 - 1336 Birth of Timūr.
 - 1337 The Ottomans capture Nicomedia.
Conquest of Cilicia by the Mamlūks.
 - 1341 Succession of John V Palaeologus. Rebellion of John Cantacuzene.
 - 1342–1344 Guy of Lusignan King of Cilicia.
 - 1342–1349 Revolution of the Zealots at Thessalonica.
 - 1344–1363 Reign of Constantine IV in Cilicia.
 - 1345 Stephen Dušan conquers Macedonia.
 - 1346 Stephen Dušan crowned Emperor of the Serbs and Greeks.
 - 1347 John VI Cantacuzene takes Constantinople.
 - 1348 Foundation of the Despotat of Mistra.
 - 1349 Independence of Moldavia.
 - 1350 Serbo-Greek treaty.
 - 1354 The Turks take Gallipoli.
 - 1355 Abdication of John VI Cantacuzene. Restoration of John V.
(20 Dec.) Death of Stephen Dušan.
 - 1356 The Turks begin to settle in Europe.
 - 1357 The Turks capture Hadrianople.
 - 1359–1389 Reign of Murād I.
 - 1360 Formation of the Janissaries from tribute-children.
 - 1363–1373 Reign of Constantine V in Cilicia.
 - 1365 The Turks establish their capital at Hadrianople.
 - 1368 Foundation of the Ming dynasty in China.
 - 1369 (21 Oct.) John V abjures the schism.
 - 1371 (26 Sept.) Battle of the Maritza.
Death of Stephen Uroš V.
 - 1373 The Emperor John V becomes the vassal of the Sultan Murād.
 - 1373–1393 Leo VI of Lusignan, the last King of Armenia.
 - 1375 Capture and exile of Leo VI of Armenia.
 - 1376–1379 Rebellion of Andronicus IV.
Coronation of Tvrtko as King of the Serbs and Bosnia.
 - 1379 Restoration of John V.
 - 1382 Death of Louis the Great of Hungary.
 - 1387 Turkish defeat on the Toplica.
Surrender of Thessalonica to the Turks.
 - 1389 (15 June) Battle of Kosovo; fall of the Serbian Empire.
 - 1389–1403 Reign of Bāyazid.
 - 1390 Usurpation of John VII Palaeologus.
 - 1391 Death of John V. Accession of Manuel II Palaeologus.
(23 Mar.) Death of Tvrtko I.
Capture of Philadelphia by the Turks.
 - 1393 Turkish conquest of Thessaly.
(17 July) Capture of Trnovo; end of the Bulgarian Empire.
 - 1394 (10 Oct.) Turkish victory at Rovine in Wallachia.
 - 1396 (25 Sept.) Battle of Nicopolis.
 - 1397 Bāyazid attacks Constantinople.
 - 1398 The Turks invade Bosnia.
Timūr invades India and sacks Delhi.
 - 1401 Timūr sacks Baghdad.
 - 1402 (28 July) Timūr defeats the Ottoman Sultan Bāyazid at Angora.
 - 1402–1413 Civil war among the Ottoman Turks.
 - 1403 (21 Nov.) Second battle of Kosovo.
 - 1405 Death of Timūr.
 - 1409 Council of Pisa.
 - 1413–1421 Reign of Mahomet I.
 - 1413 (10 July) Turkish victory at Chamorlū.
 - 1416 The Turks declare war on Venice.
(29 May) Turkish fleet defeated off Gallipoli.
 - 1418 Death of Mircea the Great of Wallachia.

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- 1421-1451 Reign of Murād II.
 - 1422 Siege of Constantinople by the Turks.
 - 1423 Turkish expedition into the Morea.
Thessalonica purchased by Venice.
 - 1423-1448 Reign of John VIII Palaeologus.
 - 1426 Battle of Choirokoitia.
 - 1430 Capture of Thessalonica by the Turks.
 - 1431 Council of Basle opens.
 - 1432 Death of the last Frankish Prince of Achaia.
 - 1438 (9 April) Opening of the Council of Ferrara.
 - 1439 (10 Jan.) The Council of Ferrara removed to Florence.
(6 July) The Union of Florence.
Completion of the Turkish conquest of Serbia.
 - 1440 The Turks besiege Belgrade.
 - 1441 John Hunyadi appointed *voivode* of Transylvania.
 - 1443-1468 Skanderbeg's war of independence against the Turks.
 - 1444 (July) Peace of Szegedin.
(10 Nov.) Battle of Varna.
 - 1446 Turkish invasion of the Morea.
 - 1448 (17 Oct.) Third battle of Kossovo. Accession of Constantine XI Palaeologus.
 - 1451 Accession of Mahomet II.
 - 1453 (29 May) Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.
 - 1456 The Turks again besiege Belgrade.
 - 1457 Stephen the Great succeeds in Moldavia.
 - 1458 The Turks capture Athens.
 - 1459 Final end of medieval Serbia.
 - 1461 Turkish conquest of Trebizond.
 - 1462-1479 War between Venice and the Turks.
 - 1463 Turkish conquest of Bosnia.
 - 1468 Turkish conquest of Albania.
 - 1475 Stephen the Great of Moldavia defeats the Turks at Racova.
 - 1479 Venice cedes Scutari to the Turks.
 - 1484 The Montenegrin capital transferred to Cetinje.
 - 1489 Venice acquires Cyprus.
 - 1499 Renewal of Turco-Venetian War.
 - 1517 Conquest of Egypt by the Turks.
 - 1523 Conquest of Rhodes by the Turks.
 - 1537-1540 Third Turco-Venetian War.
 - 1571 Conquest of Cyprus from Venice by the Turks.